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U.S. HOUSE APPROVES BILL TO OUTLAW SYNTHETIC DRUGS

LATHAM THANKS INDIANOLA FAMILY FOR EFFORTS TO SPUR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

To watch the video of Congressman Latham's remarks in favor of the Synthetic Drug Control Act, click [here](#).

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday approved legislation co-sponsored by Iowa Congressman Tom Latham that cracks down on synthetic drugs such as K2.

The legislation, titled the Synthetic Drug Control Act, would add 16 cannabimimetic and 15 hallucinogenic drugs to Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act, which would make them subject to criminal penalty for possessing and selling them. Currently, the substances can be bought legally and are often labeled as bath salts or incense. K2 can lead to serious illness, extreme paranoia and thoughts of suicide.

The U.S. House approved the legislation during a 317 - 98 roll call vote Thursday morning. Companion legislation awaits action by the U.S. Senate.

Congressional action on the issue was spurred in part by an Indianola family whose 18-year-old son shot himself after taking K2 in July 2010. Since David Rozga's death, his parents, Mike and Jan Rozga, have led an effort to raise awareness about the dangers of synthetic drugs and testified before Congress.

Congressman Latham delivered remarks on the floor of the House during debate of the legislation Wednesday evening, thanking the Rozgas for their courage.

"I want to specifically thank the Rozga family for their selfless willingness to relive the tragedy they have experienced in their efforts to prevent other families from experiencing the same heartbreak," Congressman Latham said during his remarks on the floor of the House. "This legislation and other efforts to address this threat to our children would simply not have occurred without the Rozgas' courage, strength and leadership. I'm heartened that Congress has listened to their message and is taking action. It's time to recognize how dangerous these substances really are, and ban their sale in the United States by clarifying their status as schedule I controlled substances."

Congressman Latham's full prepared remarks during Wednesday's debate are available below:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1254, the Synthetic Drug Control Act. This bill addresses an alarming danger to our kids that many American families may not be aware of. Many American teenagers are experimenting with synthetic drugs that supposedly mimic the effects of marijuana or other types of drugs. These products, known as K2, Pure Evil, Cloud Nine and other names, can often be bought legally at convenience stores and so-called "head shops," where they are passed off as incense or bath salts. In reality, users of these substances can experience unexpected anxiety attacks, extreme paranoia, hallucinations and thoughts of suicide and are at serious risk of harming themselves.

"Our experience with this issue in the State of Iowa illustrates why a federal ban on these dangerous substances is so important. A year and a half ago yesterday, 18 year old David Rozga from Indianola shot himself after taking K2. In response to the tragedy, Rozga's parents Mike and Jan have led a campaign to outlaw synthetic drugs like K2, testified before Congress about the dangers of the drug, and enlisted the help of their elected representatives in cracking down on the sale and abuse of these substances.

"My colleagues, we must act on this issue to protect our kids, and the time is now. The threat posed by synthetic drugs is dangerous and it is growing. In the past two weeks alone there were several cases where teens were injured or hospitalized after taking synthetic drugs. In Polk County three teens were involved in a high speed crash after smoking one of these substances. In central Iowa a teenage boy was hospitalized after taking synthetic drugs and becoming violently ill, and having seizures, vomiting and hallucinations.

"I want to specifically thank the Rozga family for their selfless willingness to relive the tragedy they have experienced in their efforts to prevent other families from experiencing the same heartbreak. This legislation and other efforts to address this threat to our children would simply not have occurred without the Rozgas' courage, strength and leadership.

"I'm heartened that Congress has listened to their message and is taking action. It's time to recognize how dangerous these substances really are, and ban their sale in the United States by clarifying their status as schedule I controlled substances. As a cosponsor of H.R. 1254, I urge my colleagues to support passage of this most important piece of legislation."